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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [EUN](#) [FI](#)
SUBJECT: FINLAND: PRESIDENCY UPPING SRI LANKA INVOLVEMENT

REF: A. STATE 128399
[1](#)B. OTALLAH CO-CHAIRS READOUT EMAIL

Classified By: Polchief Gregory D. Thome, for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

(C) MFA Asia Department Deputy Director Rauli Suikkanen and desk officer Marita Meranto told Emboff Aug. 16 that the Finnish EU Presidency is seeking to become more involved in helping to resolve the conflict in Sri Lanka. Following an EU meeting on the situation in Brussels among EU COPS representatives today, Meranto predicted that an EU Presidency statement would be issued. Finland welcomes the opportunity to participate in Co-Chair activities in its Presidency capacity and would like to attend the Co-Chairs meeting in Brussels in early September. Helsinki also plans a visit to Sri Lanka--where it is represented by Germany--in the fall to make the Presidency more visible, and would use the September 10-11 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM summit) and the EU-India summit in October to raise Sri Lanka.

(C) Meranto and Suikkanen remained pessimistic about the continuation of hostilities in Sri Lanka, and noted that an EU demarche to the SL Foreign Minister August 15 had produced scant response. The SL DCM had told Meranto earlier that day that the GOSL hoped that the peace process could continue and that the cease fire would not be "null and void;" however, he added that the GOSL "needs to defend itself." In response to EU approaches to the GOSL on the need for NGOs to have free access to internally displaced persons in the north and east of the country, the Foreign Minister proposed a conference on the role of NGOs. Suikkanen reported that NGOs had received limited access to disputed areas to investigate the recent deaths of aid workers. Finland would like to raise Sri Lanka in the Human Rights Council when it reconvenes September 18 to obtain a stronger investigative mandate for the HRC representative in Colombo, thereby signalling to all parties that human rights could not be violated with impunity.

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